



# Congressman Tim Bishop

*FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK*

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **BISHOP, GRIJALVA AND HARE PASS AMENDMENT TO ENSURE CHILDREN HAVE A RIDE TO SCHOOL**

*Legislation responds to local needs for Head Start transportation funding*

WASHINGTON, DC - Today Representatives Tim Bishop (D-New York), Raúl Grijalva (D-Arizona) and Phil Hare (D-Illinois) successfully attached an amendment to the 2007 Head Start bill which would help ensure that all children are able to get a ride to their Head Start programs.

“After talking with local educators and parents, I have learned that many Head Start programs have been forced to terminate or severely reduce school transportation due to a lack of funds,” said Bishop. “Our amendment is simple—it will allow Head Start programs to use some of their quality improvement funds to supplement transportation costs.”

Head Start programs throughout the country traditionally have provided children with transportation in large geographic areas with little or no public mass transit. Without public transportation, many parents—including working parents and guardians, those who do not drive, and those with children with disabilities—may not be able to take their children to a Head Start program.

“Many of my constituents in rural areas have told me that reliable transportation is one of the greatest challenges they face in accessing this program,” Hare said. “We have a responsibility to ensure that Head Start has the flexibility to provide its services to every eligible family that wants it, regardless of where they happen to live.”

As a result of the cumulative cuts imposed nationwide (11 percent since 2002 with the potential to grow to 13 percent in Fiscal Year 2008), Head Start programs throughout the country have been forced to eliminate or drastically reduce bus transportation because they can no longer carry the costs of transportation services.

“This amendment provides for much needed flexibility so that grantees don't have to choose between improving teacher quality or providing transportation,” said Grijalva. “I strongly supported this amendment and am pleased with its passage today along with the underlying bill.”

The amendment does not add any additional funds for transportation to the bill, nor does it take away a grantee's funds for quality improvement. By a strong bipartisan vote of 42-1, the House Education and Labor Committee passed The Improving Head Start Act of 2007 later in the day.